

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:LHW  
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND  
PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER  
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SSM - MR. MC ANDREW  
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER  
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH  
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM  
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY

-----091634 200252Z /63

O 200048Z APR 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
USMISSION SINAI  
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
USMISSION USNATO  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
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AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
USCINCEUR  
DOD  
JCS WASHDC 0000

CIA WASHDC 0000  
USICA  
NSC WASHDC 0000

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - APRIL 19, 1978

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS  
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR APRIL 19. FYI ONLY,  
OFFICER PRESENT TODAY WAS TOM RESTON.

Q. WOULD YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE RESIGNATION OF THE  
LEBANESE GOVERNMENT?

A. WE OF COURSE HAVE SEEN THE REPORTS, BUT WE HAVE NO  
COMMENTS TO OFFER. WE WOULD NOTE THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS IS  
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IN CHARGE AND HAS ASKED THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT TO STAY ON  
IN A CARETAKER ROLE UNTIL A NEW GOVERNMENT IS FORMED. THE  
LEBANESE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES PROCEDURES TO COVER THIS  
SITUATION.

Q. WHAT'S THE U.S. POSITION ON THE REPORT SAYING THAT  
ISRAEL WOULD LIKE TO LINK RESOLUTION 425 AND THE  
WITHDRAWAL OF ITS TROOPS FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON WITH RESO-  
LUTION 242?

A. I HAVEN'T SEEN THAT REPORT.

Q. FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN, IN HIS TELEVISION INTERVIEW  
LAST FRIDAY, SAID THAT WE ARE READY TO NEGOTIATE ON THE  
BASIS OF 242 WITH ALL OUR NEIGHBORS, INCLUDING LEBANON--  
INSISTED ON LEBANON. FU'AD BUTRUS, THE LEBANESE MINISTER  
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SAID THAT WE ARE BOUND TO NEGOTIATE  
WITH THE ISRAELIS, IF WE ARE TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM, ON  
THE BASIS OF RESOLUTION 425. HOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?

A. I REALLY AM NOT AWARE OF THE SECOND STATEMENT TO WHICH  
YOU REFER. AS TO THE LINKAGE BETWEEN 242 AND 425, I  
REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON THAT NOW.

Q. WOULD YOU TAKE THE QUESTION, PLEASE--IS THERE ANY  
LINK BETWEEN 242 AND 425?

A. O.K.

Q. HAVE YOU HAD ANY RECENT CONTACT WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT?

A. WE ARE IN REGULAR TOUCH WITH THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES, BUT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO CATALOG OR GET INTO THE CONTENT OF OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES WITH THEM.

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Q. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HAD ANY CONTACT WITH THEM?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. IS ROY ATHERTON GOING TO ISRAEL STILL?

A. HIS PLANS BEYOND EGYPT ARE UP IN THE AIR AT THIS POINT.

Q. YOU SAID THAT HE WAS GOING.

A. I SAID THAT THE PLAN WAS FOR HIM TO GO ON TO ISRAEL AFTER SEVERAL DAYS IN EGYPT. NOW I AM TELLING YOU THAT THOSE PLANS ARE UP IN THE AIR AND IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT HIS TRAVEL PLANS WILL BE AFTER HE IS IN CAIRO.

Q. WHY ARE THEY UP IN THE AIR? WHAT HAS CHANGED TO MAKE YOU CHANGE?

A. IT'S JUST UNSETTLED.

Q. I MEAN WHAT'S MORE UNSETTLED TODAY THAN IT WAS TWO OR THREE DAYS AGO WHEN YOU MADE THAT STATEMENT?

A. WELL, THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS IN THE ISRAELI PRESS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN WILL BE COMING TO WASHINGTON. I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM THAT FOR YOU. AS YOU KNOW, I THINK WE'VE STATED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS THINKING ABOUT COMING HERE PRIOR TO THE SECRETARY'S DEPARTURE FOR AFRICA AND IT PROVED TO BE IMPOSSIBLE AT THAT TIME BECAUSE OF THE SECRETARY'S GETTING READY TO GO TO AFRICA. OBVIOUSLY, MR. ATHERTON'S PLANS WOULD BE CONTINGENT ON THE POSSIBILITY OF MR. DAYAN COMING HERE TO WASH-  
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INGTON, BUT I CAN'T CONFIRM A DATE OR EVEN THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER.

Q. HAS ISRAEL SAID THAT THE TIME MAY NOT BE RIGHT FOR

HIM TO GO THERE NOW OR WHY THIS APPARENT CHANGE IN SCHEDULE?

A. THE PLANS WERE YESTERDAY THAT HE WAS GOING TO GO TO ISRAEL AFTER SEVERAL DAYS IN CAIRO, AND I THINK I DID SAY THAT WE SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR THE AMBASSADOR TO RETURN TO THE AREA AND THAT BOTH THE PARTIES AGREED AND SO THAT THE PLANS WERE FOR HIM TO GO. NOW I AM CITING THESE REPORTS IN THE ISRAELI PRESS THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ISRAEL MIGHT BE COMING HERE, AND OBVIOUSLY THE TWO ARE RELATED. IF DAYAN IS GOING TO COME HERE, PROBABLY ATHERTON WILL NOT GO TO ISRAEL.

Q. YOU NORMALLY MAKE IT A POINT NOT TO RESPOND FROM THAT PODIUM TO REPORTS FROM THE PRESS. SURELY YOU MUST HAVE SOMETHING. FIRST OF ALL, THE PHONE PRESUMABLY STILL WORKS BETWEEN HERE AND THE ISRAELI EMBASSY. COULDN'T YOU GET SOMETHING MORE DEFINITIVE THAN WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY GIVEN US?

A. I'LL TRY TO GET SOMETHING MORE DEFINITIVE THAN THIS.

Q. ARE THE INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN LEBANON AND ISRAEL RECOGNIZED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT?

A. I JUST WANT TO REAFFIRM OUR LONGSTANDING POLICY THAT WE ARE IN FAVOR OF THE SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, UNITY AND NATIONAL COHESION OF LEBANON.

Q. YESTERDAY YOU SAID THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS STUDYING THE ISRAELI CABINET'S STATEMENT ON 242. ARE YOU STILL STUDYING, OR IS IT FINISHED? IF IT IS FINISHED, UNCLASSIFIED

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CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT IT? AND THIRD, IS THERE ANY LINK BETWEEN THAT STUDY AND WHAT YOU MAY HAVE DEDUCED FROM IT--AND ATHERTON BEING UP IN THE AIR?

A. THE ANSWER TO THE LAST QUESTION IS: NO. AND SO FAR AS I KNOW, WE ARE STILL STUDYING THAT STATEMENT. I HAVE NOTHING NEW ON IT FOR YOU.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE, THEN, OF MR. ATHERTON'S VISIT TO CAIRO? HE WAS SUPPOSED TO GO TO BOTH PLACES AND COME OUT WITH SOMETHING.

A. WELL, LET ME POINT OUT THAT IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME SINCE WE HAVE HAD FACE TO FACE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EGYPTIANS.

--AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ADVISORS HAD DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN SEVERAL WEEKS AGO

DURING THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT HERE. IN THOSE DISCUSSIONS EACH SIDE WAS ABLE TO GO THOROUGHLY INTO ITS IDEAS ON THE KEY ISSUES. WE HAVE NOT HAD EXTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT SINCE EARLY MARCH, WHEN AMBASSADOR ATHERTON LEFT CAIRO.

--LET ME SAY THAT FROM THE REPORT WHICH AMBASSADOR ATHERTON WILL BRING BACK FROM CAIRO, THE SECRETARY EXPECTS TO GET FURTHER REFINEMENT IN PLANS FOR HOW TO PROCEED NEXT IN THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS.

Q. TOM, SO WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS THAT THE TRIP WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED ON MONDAY AS A TRIP TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT, AND CONFIRMED YESTERDAY, IS NOW A TRIP ONLY TO EGYPT?

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A. I AM SAYING THAT IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT MR. ATHERTON'S PLANS ARE AFTER HE LEAVES EGYPT.

Q. THE WAY YOU HAVE PUT THIS HERE, YOU HAVEN'T HAD THESE EXTENSIVE TALKS WITH THE EGYPTIANS SINCE EARLY MARCH. WHAT HAS PREVENTED YOU FROM DOING IT?

A. THERE'S NOTHING THAT HAS PREVENTED US FROM DOING IT. WE THOUGHT THAT THIS WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR AMBASSADOR ATHERTON TO GO OUT TO THE AREA. NOTHING HAS PREVENTED US FROM TALKING WITH THE EGYPTIANS.

Q. THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT THE URGENCY INVOLVED IN RESOLVING THIS PROBLEM AND NOW YOUR STATEMENT IS WRITTEN IN SUCH A WAY AS TO EXPLAIN ATHERTON'S VISIT IN TERMS OF WE HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO THE EGYPTIANS. WHAT IS THE AMBASSADOR DOING THERE? WHY HASN'T ATHERTON GONE OUT EARLIER?

A. YOU KNOW I DON'T THINK THAT ANYTHING SHOULD BE READ INTO THIS. I AM SAYING THAT I DO NOT THINK THAT ANY MAJOR IMPLICATIONS SHOULD BE DRAWN FROM WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID. I THINK THAT AS I STATED WHEN WE FIRST ANNOUNCED AMBASSADOR ATHERTON'S TRIP, I THINK THAT THE SECRETARY CONSULTED WITH AMBASSADOR ATHERTON AND WITH THE MIDDLE EAST EXPERTS HERE, AND WE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR AMBASSADOR ATHERTON TO GO BACK OUT TO THE AREA.

-- OF COURSE THERE IS AN URGENCY TO THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU NECESSARILY HAVE TO HAVE MEETINGS ALL THE TIME. SOMETIMES IT'S MORE PROPITIOUS TO HAVE A MEETING THAN AT OTHER TIMES.

Q. IS IT FAIR TO ASSUME THAT THE REASON ATHERTON MAY NOT

GO TO ISRAEL AFTER CAIRO IS BECAUSE DAYAN MAY COME HERE,  
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BECAUSE THE ISRAELIS PREFER TO TALK FACE TO FACE IN  
WASHINGTON THAN THROUGH AN EMISSARY?

A. I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE TO ASK THE ISRAELIS WHAT THEIR  
PREFERENCE IS. I COULDN'T REALLY ADDRESS THAT. OBVIOUSLY,  
AMBASSADOR ATHERTON, WHETHER HE IS OUT THERE IN THE AREA,  
OR BACK HERE IN WASHINGTON WITH VARIOUS FOREIGN MINISTERS  
COMING IN, IS A VERY, VERY KEY ADVISOR AND A TRUSTED  
ADVISOR OF THIS ADMINISTRATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIA-  
TING PROCESS.

Q. IS IT YOUR UNDERSTANDING THAT DAYAN MIGHT ACCOMPANY  
BEGIN WHEN HE COMES, LATE THIS MONTH OR EARLY NEXT MONTH,  
IN CONNECTION WITH THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY VISIT?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. IS THE SECRETARY PLANNING TO GO OUT THERE IN THE NEAR  
FUTURE?

A. I KNOW OF NO SUCH PLANS.

Q. ARE THERE ANY TENTATIVE PLANS FOR THE SECRETARY TO  
MEET DAYAN NEXT WEEK?

A. I CAN'T CONFIRM ANY SET PLANS--I AM JUST NOT IN A  
POSITION TO DO IT RIGHT NOW.

Q. SOME TIME AGO YOU SAID THAT YOU WOULD CALL ON ISRAEL  
TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS TO THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER BE-  
TWEEN ISRAEL AND LEBANON--AND THAT NOW YOU ARE RELUCTANT

TO TELL ME TO RECOGNIZE THE INTERNATIONAL BORDERS BETWEEN  
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LEBANON AND ISRAEL. HAS YOUR POSITION CHANGED ABOUT  
BOUNDARIES, OR WHAT?

A. NO, OUR POSITION HAS NOT CHANGED. WE RECOGNIZE THE  
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM  
SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM WILL REPORT TO THE SECUR-  
ITY COUNCIL AFTER HIS RETURN FROM THE AREA. WE WANT TO  
HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY, AND WILL WITHHOLD ANY COMMENT

UNTIL AFTER HE REPORTS.

--WE DO, HOWEVER, NOTE THAT ISRAEL HAS SAID IT WILL CARRY OUT RESOLUTION 425 IN ALL ITS PARTS.

--FOR OURSELVES, WE TOOK THE LEAD AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE PASSAGE OF RESOLUTION 425 WHICH HAS AS ITS THREE MAJOR OBJECTIVES: ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON; ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCE; AND EXTENSION OF THE LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON TO THIS AREA.

2. THE FOLLOWING WAS POSTED IN THE DEPARTMENT TODAY IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON APRIL 18:

Q. WHEN WILL AMBASSADOR ATHERTON DEPART FOR THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. AMBASSADOR ATHERTON LEFT WASHINGTON ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 19TH.

Q. WHAT IS THE DATE OF THE PLANNED SUBMISSION OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S MIDDLE EAST ARMS PACKAGE TO CONGRESS?

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A. APRIL 26, 1978.  
CHRISTOPHER

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

## Message Attributes

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